

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 SSM-03 MCT-01 /100 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:A A THIBAUT:LB
APPROVED BY NEA:A L ATHERTON, JR.
EUR/NE:R E WOODS

-----000470 252337Z /62

P R 252324Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 077926

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON NEA ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ATHERTON: SECURITY ISSUES FOR UN INTERIM PEACE-
KEEPING FORCE

1. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OF VIGGEN SALE TO INDIA DURING
HIS MARCH 24 MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON
(SEPTTEL) AMBASSADOR WACHTMEISTER POINTED OUT THAT SWEDEN
WAS ASSIGNING TROOPS TO THE INTERIM UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON. WACHTMEISTER POINTED TO HIS GOVERNMENT'S OBVIOUS
CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF THESE TROOPS AND INQUIRED ABOUT
OUR VIEW OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE REGION AS THE UN
FORCE PREPARES TO TAKE OVER ITS PEACEKEEPING RESPONSIBIL-
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ITIES.

2. WACHTMEISTER ASKED, FIRST, WHETHER THE SYRIANS WOULD
COOPERATE IN LIMITING PALESTINIAN INFILTRATION OF THE ZONE
BEING PATROLLED BY THE UN FORCE. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT ALL
INDICATIONS SUGGEST THE SYRIANS, DESPITE THEIR PUBLIC
STATEMENTS, ARE ACTING WITH CONSIDERABLE CAUTION AND

RESTRAINT AND, THROUGH THEIR FORCES IN LEBANON, WILL PURSUE A POLICY OF COOPERATION WITH THE UN FORCES. ATHERTON CITED THE ANNOUNCEMENT ISSUED BY THE SYRIAN-DOMINATED ARAB DETERRENT FORCES STATIONED IN LEBANON CONCERNING THE FUTURE

SUPPLY OF ARMS TO THE PALESTINIANS AS REFLECTING A SYRIAN EFFORT TO GET THE PLO TO ABIDE BY THE CEASEFIRE AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. ATHERTON ADDED OUR VIEW IS THAT THE UN'S MANDATE COVERS KEEPING ARMED PALESTINIANS OUT OF THE REGION BETWEEN THE LITANI RIVER AND THE ISRAELI BORDER. THERE CONTINUES TO REMAIN A SIZABLE PLO PRESENCE IN TYRE BUT EVEN SO, THE UN MANDATE SHOULD BE INTERPRETED TO LIMIT THE RE-ENTRY OF ARMED PERSONNEL TO THOSE AUTHORIZED BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

3. WACHTMEISTER THAN INQUIRED ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE PLO ITSELF. ATHERTON RESPONDED BY NOTING THAT DIFFERENT PLO SPOKESMEN HAVE SAID DIFFERENT THINGS. THE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP OF THE PLO (FATAH) HAS NOT SAID PUBLICLY THAT IT WILL ABIDE BY THE CEASEFIRE BUT ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT, DE FACTO, THE PLO WILL NOT SABOTAGE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS AND FIRE ON UN FORCES. THIS, OF COURSE, DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF SPLINTER GROUPS ATTEMPTING TO CREATE PROBLEMS BUT THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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IN A POSITION TO SO ACT AND ON THIS POINT THE UN HAS THE AUTHORITY TO KEEP THEM OUT. WACHTMEISTER ASKED WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ANY CHANGE IN THE PLO ATTITUDE FOLLOWING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO WHICH ATHERTON ANSWERED THAT THIS WOULD DEPEND IN PART ON THE SYRIAN ATTITUDE AND IN THIS RESPECT WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY THE CAUTION DESCRIBED ABOVE. IF THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS BREAK DOWN IT IS CLEAR THE ISRAELIS WOULD RETALIATE. THUS, WHILE THERE IS ALWAYS A RISK OF TROUBLE THERE IS ALSO A POWERFUL INCENTIVE TO THE SYRIANS TO KEEP THE LID ON.

4. ATHERTON WENT ON TO OBSERVE THAT THE BIG QUESTION IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN NORTH OF THE LITANI WHERE NEITHER THE UN NOR THE SYRIANS, NOR THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT EXERCISE ANY AUTHORITY OVER WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY PALESTINIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY. THERE ARE NEGOTIATIONS TO SEE IF THE SYRIANS CAN MOVE DOWN TO THE UN-CONTROLLED LINE BUT THE DIFFICULTY FOR THE SYRIANS IN THIS RESPECT IS THAT IT WOULD INVOLVE BRINGING THE PLO IN THE AREA UNDER CONTROL. IN ADDITION, THE ISRAELIS HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE SYRIANS MOVING SOUTH OF THEIR PRESENT LINES. THE U.S. VIEW, NONETHELESS, IS THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE

TO CLOSE THIS GAP. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECURITY, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE077926
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: A A THIBAUT:LB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780132-0329
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780324/aaaaauew.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 90cf12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3201228
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SWEDISH AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY AHERTON: SECURITY ISSUES FOR UN INTERIM PEACE-KEEPING FORCE
TAGS: MARR, SW, LE, UN
To: STOCKHOLM
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/90cf12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014